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Sailors and Soldiers Compete in Expert Field Medical Badge Competition

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Photo by PO1 Christopher Krucke

Commander's Column

By COL Christopher Boyle
Commander, U.S. Army
Warrior Transition Command-
National Capital Region

The Department of Defense has designated November as Warrior Care Month, a time to honor our wounded, ill and injured Soldiers for the sacrifices they and their families have made for our nation. This year's theme is "Show of Strength." To celebrate Warrior Care Month, Warrior Transition Brigade-National Capital Region will host a myriad of events including healthy cooking demonstrations, military/veteran career expos, a wheelchair basketball exhibition featuring NBA Players, a caregiver/non-medical attendant success workshop, and an adaptive sports tournament. The Soldiers, Families and Caregivers of WTB-NCR will get to "show their strength" by highlighting their recovery, reconditioning, reintegration and resilience.

In WTB-NCR, every month is "Warrior Care Month". In addition to receiving world-class health care, the Soldiers of WTB-NCR actively participate in adaptive reconditioning programs that allow them to remain active. Many WTB-NCR Soldiers were involved with physical reconditioning in preparation for the Warrior Games trials that were held at Fort Benning, GA. WTB-NCR Soldiers will be trained by world-renowned coaches and to compete in archery, cycling, shooting (air rifle/air pistol), swimming, track & field, seated volleyball and wheelchair basketball.

Soldiers like Spc. Stephanie Morris, an avid athlete, complement their medical treatment with a healthy dose of exercise.

Soldiers who are likely to transition from the military work in internships in the Federal government as a part of OPERATION WARFIGHTER. As an example, Spc. Claude Pullen is an intern at the Army Research Laboratory and was the guest speaker at ARL's Disabilities Appreciation Month event. Similarly, Cpl. Jennifer Pohl received a full scholarship to the Animal Behavior College through the Yellow Ribbon Fund, "Companions for Heroes," starting in November 2016.

These Soldiers are only a small sampling of the continued commitment to service that is found in the WTB-NCR population.



Some of the unsung heroes who always show strength are caregivers and non-medical attendants. The support they provide for their Soldiers during the healing and transition process is invaluable.

Caregivers not only provide crucial support for Soldiers, but they often assist the cadre in determining the best path to achieve optimal outcomes. They often do this without accolades or recognition.

Finally, the military and civilian cadre of WTB-NCR continues living up to the pledge, "I will never leave a fallen comrade." Empathic and dedicated, the cadre works tirelessly to ensure our Soldiers and their Families are prepared for the next stage of their lives.

Warrior Care Month offers a great opportunity for the community to reflect on our shared commitment to those who serve in the defense of our Nation. From the WTB-NCR team, thanks to our partners for your continued support. Army Strong!

Bethesda Notebook

Flu Vaccine
Walter Reed Bethesda beneficiaries and staff members can still get their flu vaccine now through Nov. 22 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Building 9, first floor, in front of Radiology at the maroon tent area. A Common Access Card for staff and an identification card for beneficiaries are needed to receive the vaccine.

'Scarred For Life'
Ted Meyers, an artist and patient advocate, will discuss "Scarred for Life: Using Art to Bring Humanity to Trauma and Recovery," on Nov. 15 from noon to 1 p.m. in the America Building, second floor, Great Lake Conference Room. The event is part of the Arts-in-Health Month observance. Other activities include the Art Stop 1 (prize-winning photography by Army and Air Force photographers) in Building 9, first floor (in the area at the entrance of the Liberty Zone to Arrowhead Zone connector, next to Pulmonary); and the Stages of Healing performances throughout the month. For more information about the performance, contact U.S. Public Health Service Lt. Cmdr. Micah Sickel at 301-295-2492.

Fleet, Family Support Center
The Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) on Naval Support Activity Bethesda offers programs intended to assist service members and their families with military life. FFSC's workshops and seminars include: job search strategies for military spouses; federal resume writing; time management; credit management; consumer financial awareness; interview skills; pre-deployment briefings; return and reunion briefings; and more. For more information, call 301-319-4087, or visit FFSC in Bldg. 11, first floor.

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PHOTO BY PO1 CHRISTOPHER KRUCKE

A candidate for the Expert Field Medical Badge prepares a victim for extrication from a vehicle as part of recent testing for the badge at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.

Service Members Test For Expert Field Medical Badge

By Petty Officer 1st Class Christopher Krucke
WRNMMC Public Affairs

Two hundred and twelve Soldiers and Sailors competed in this year's Expert Field Medical Badge (EFMB) competition at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., starting Oct. 23.

The U.S. Army established the EFMB in 1965 to recognize exceptional battlefield medical skills. The week-long testing for the badge challenges candidates' knowledge and endurance, starting with a written exam, navigating training lanes where they are tested in real-life combat scenarios, and ending with a grueling, cold and early morning 12-mile ruck march carrying approximately 40 pounds of equipment.

"This is the most sought after badge in the Army medical department during peace-time. It shows the degree of excellence that only about 15 to 18 percent of the Army medical department achieve," said Army Lt. Col. Michael Wissemann, test board president for the 2016 EFMB.

This statistic was verified by the fact that only 41 of the 212 competitors who recently tested for the EFMB earned it. Six of 41 came from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Those earning the badge were Capt. Rei Thomas (Rehabilitation and Physical Medicine, B Company), 1st Lt. Erin Cannon (Surgical Nursing, 4C, C Company), 1st Lt. Tyler Clarke (Telemetry, 3C, C Company), 1st Lt. Delaney Ferguson (Surgical Nursing, C Company), 1st Lt. Lauren Graham (Surgical Nursing, 4W, C Company), 1st Lt. Carolyn Rice (Surgical Nursing, C Company) and 1st Lt. LaSheika Banks (Nursing, C Company).

Wissemann, who earned the badge in 2001, said, "These days we focus heavily on tactical combat casualty care which is essential to the success in our deployed environment from tourniquet to abdominal dressings to triage and making sure we can evacuate casualties as well using helicopter skids."

Army Staff Sgt. Stephen Phillips, who was the Lane

Three non-commissioned officer, explained that the event "encompasses warrior tasks, disassembly and assembly of the M-16, reacting to direct fire, the low crawl and high crawl. Beyond that is the Humvee load of patients for critical care."

While navigating the lanes, explosions and gun fire could be heard throughout the course. "In a training environment, we have the [rounds simulations]," said Phillips. "The rounds simulate explosions that would test the Soldier on taking cover. They can simulate either mortar or grenade."

Army Col. Michael S. Heimall, WRNMMC director, explained that the purpose of the rounds was to "simulate combat situations for those out here competing for the EFMB. We have blank rounds, [simulation] machine gun fire, mortar fire and smoke to obscure what is going on to put more stress on the candidates."

Heimall added, "This reinforces their ability to do their combat-related tasks and at the end of the day, that is an important skill for all of us in uniform to maintain."

"We do get to walk through the lanes," said Graham, one of the six from WRNMMC to earn the EFMB during this testing. "They have to show us what 'right' looks like so we get to see somebody go through at full speed [and] we know what to expect so nothing is a surprise, but when the grenade goes off it still surprises you even though you know it is coming."

Heimall explained whether or not those who tested for the badge earned it, the experience was invaluable for all of the participants.

"You try to train the best that you can," said Graham. This was her second effort to earn the badge. "I can't give you an actual number, just that in the past couple months leading up to this I have been training... a lot." She attributed this year's success to "muscle memory... a lot of this is muscle memory."

Although this is an individually graded competition,



PHOTO BY PO1 CHRISTOPHER KRUCKE

Participants vying for the Expert Field Medical Badge tackle the 12-mile road march in full battle gear as the last challenge for the coveted badge for excellence in medical field care.

participants would rely on each other for support and encouragement.

"You can't have help from anyone else during the competition, but it takes a village," said Graham. "We had an awesome and motivating drill sergeant; our whole platoon was motivated all the time. We would help each other out. I stayed in a tent with some amazing women. You always have somebody... a battle buddy."

For the testing, participants arrived from as far away as Qatar. Reservists made up 9 percent of those who tested for the EFMB; 20 percent were National Guards from nine different states; and two Sailors test for the badge.

"We had a phenomenal team out here," said Wissemann.

"It's a tough test, tougher than the Expert Infantry Badge for our infantrymen in the Army, and [the EFMB candidates] should be proud of themselves for going through it," said Heimall.



PHOTO BY ELIE NAANOUH

Construction workers have been relocating utilities near Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in preparation for a major redesign of the medical facility.



PHOTO BY ELIE NAANOUH

Utility work has closed off a portion of Brown Drive while construction workers relocate and upgrade utilities. The \$39.6 million project is expected to be completed by next fall.

Public Works Gearing Up for Medical Center Redesign

By Andrew Damstedt
The Journal

Look around Naval Support Activity Bethesda.

Odds are there's a construction project nearby.

A lot of the construction now is in preparation for a major redesign of Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

"With that new hospital we really [needed] to do the pre-utility work," said Lt. Cmdr. Donny Newsom, facilities, engineering and acquisition director.

Two projects that NSAB Public Works Department is working on in preparation for the redesign are upgrades and relocation of utilities, and building a new parking garage. Two projects that have been completed in the past two months are upgrading the cooling tower system, and finishing exterior work on Buildings 60 and 61.

"This installation has a phenomenal

mission," Newsom said. "It's very easy to get behind the mission of patient care. How we plug into that, is public works is a service provider for that mission ... We do that in a couple of ways: One, we maintain the current facilities, and we also construct any new facilities that they need or any renovations that they need."

The \$39.6 million utility project has had delays, but is expected to be completed by next fall, according to construction manager Jean Band.

"As with most projects that are underground, we're finding a lot of unforeseen utilities – old utilities

"We're trying to do it as quickly and safely as possible," said construction manager Jean Band. "It's caused disruption to normal traffic and pedestrian flows – that's with the interest of No. 1, getting the job done as quickly as possible and No. 2, for safety reasons we don't want people getting too close to the construction."

that nobody knew were there, water lines, storm drain lines – so that slows everything down until you can figure out – if it's abandoned – can we tear it out or is it still in service," Band said. "If it's in service, can we leave it there or do we have to reroute that?"

The utility project started construction in 2015 and the contract was awarded to Whiting-Turner, who has an average of 100 people working on the project on a daily basis, Band said.

The project consists of installing new and relocating existing utilities that will either be put in a utility

tunnel (pneumatic tubes, steam, condensate return and chilled water lines) or dirt buried (potable water supply, storm water drainage, sanitary sewers and natural gas lines).

"We're trying to do it as quickly and safely as possible," Band said. "It's caused disruption to normal traffic and pedestrian flows – that's with the interest of No. 1, getting the job done as quickly as possible and No. 2, for safety reasons we don't want people getting too close to the

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Clinical Psychology Graduate Internship Ends with 7

By Sharon
Renee Taylor
WRNMMC
Public Affairs

The fourth and final graduating class of clinical psychology interns at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) marked the achievement with a ceremony in Memorial Auditorium Oct. 23. Five Sailors and two Soldiers completed year-long programs led by Dr. Brandy Hellman, Army Clinical Program Training Director and Dr. Richard D. Bergthold, Navy Clinical Program Training Director.

Fort Bragg, N.C., is the next stop for the two new Army psychologists for their post-graduate residency. The Sailors depart for their first assignments as psychologists to Maine, North Carolina, Guam and Portsmouth, rotating between Navy hospitals, a



PHOTO BY SHARON RENEE TAYLOR

The fourth and final graduating class of clinical psychology interns at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center marked their achievement with a ceremony in Memorial Auditorium Oct. 23. Five Sailors and two Soldiers completed year-long programs.

clinic, and a medical center.

Although collocated at WRNMMC as part of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), the Army and Navy programs were separately accredited by the American Psychological Association. Each program maintained its own, distinct training mission, with plans to eventually relocate in the future. The newest class of Navy clinical psychology graduate interns will remain at WRNMMC, while the Army Clinical

Psychology Internship Program moves to Fort Bragg.

Retired Army Lt. Col. (Dr.) Michael E. Perry, a graduate of the Army's Psychology Internship program, delivered the graduation address, reassuring the new graduates of their unique positions as clinical psychologists.

"Your life is about to change," Perry told them. "You will share in the point of people's lives that no one else knows," he added.

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USU's Health Professions Education Degree Program seeks providers

By Sarah Marshall
USU External Affairs

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) is seeking health care professionals who would like to gain expertise in leadership, research and theories in one of the university's new innovative and dynamic graduate programs.

Last year, USU's F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine launched the Master of Health Professions Education (MHPE) and the Doctor of Philosophy in Health Professions Education (PhD in HPE), as it became clear there was a need for leaders with academic skills within all military services. Many senior-ranking physician educators and program leaders had retired, separated from the military, or had changed their career path. These new degree programs offer a chance for military providers to fulfill that need in the Military Health System (MHS), and become educational leaders and scholars.

"Those who complete these programs will be very well prepared to serve as academic leaders, such as program directors, clerkship directors, service chiefs, chairs, or educational deans," explained Dr. Steven Durning, director of Graduate Programs in HPE. "They'll also contribute to the continuous advancement of health professions education and research in the MHS as well as in the civilian community."

The programs are geared toward active duty military personnel who are health professionals, including physicians, nurses, dentists, as well as DoD civilian health professionals working in the MHS or the Public Health Service. The programs can be completed on a part- or full-time basis, and blend face-to-face coursework and practicum opportunities with



PHOTO BY SARAH MARSHALL

Dr. Alexis Battista, second from right, teaches a recent seminar at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, that's part of the university's new Health Professions Education program.

a robust online learning community. The programs focus on a number of competencies, including leadership, scholarship and research, teaching, learning and assessment, and communication.

"Our HPE programs are staff by a world-class faculty who have published more than 500 peer-reviewed journal articles and have won more than \$30 million in grant funding for educational research," said Dr. Louis Pangaro, chair of USU's Department of Medicine, which oversees the degree program.

"They're highly regarded, exceptional leaders who are committed to intellectual development and professional growth," Durning said of military health care professionals.

Advanced degrees in health professions education are also increasingly emphasized as a requirement for academic leadership positions throughout the nation's medical educational system, he added, and so these programs are expected to have a lasting

impact on both the MHS and the civilian community.

The first student to enroll in the PhD program, Dr. Matthew D'Angelo, agreed with those sentiments. He is an assistant professor and Interim Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs in the Daniel K. Inouye Graduate School of Nursing (GSN), and has been teaching graduate level nursing for the last decade.

"The HPE program has offered countless experiences where I'm given the opportunity to reflect on how I, and the programs within the GSN, deliver curriculum and how it is evaluated," D'Angelo said.

The program has helped him conceptualize and develop online teaching materials for austere anesthesia, he said. In turn, he has created a new faculty orientation seminar, covering a variety of topics in education.

What he most enjoys about the program is learning the basis of "why" he teaches the way he teaches.

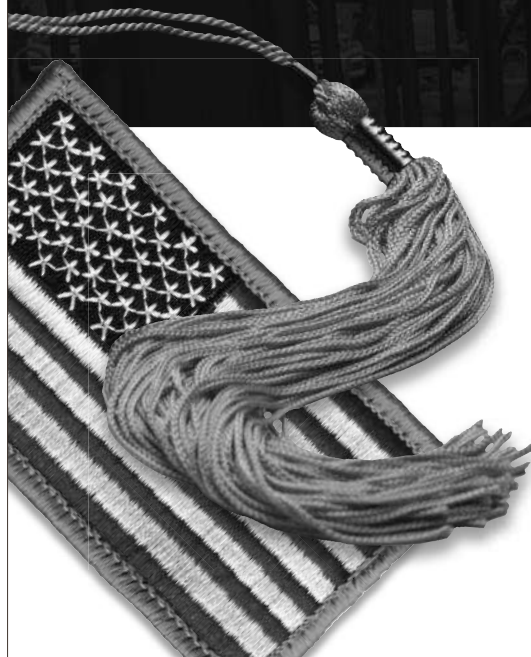
"I think good teaching is often intuitive, but the administration of education is far more complex ... I (now) think differently about how I teach and how we instruct our advanced practice nursing students."

He added that the workload has been challenging, requiring a breadth of understanding in a range of topics, but the faculty have been supportive.

"Modern education is far more complex than it was 20 years ago," he said. "As we, as a society, move to competency-based education, faculty will need to be versed in rigorous assessment techniques and have a solid foundation in curriculum design ... The HPE program, by far, will be an asset to the university and the future of military health care education."

For more information about the HPE programs, visit www.usuhs.edu/hpe. To register, visit www.usuhs.edu/graded/application.html.

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Navy Presents Fisher House Award to Honor Flight Network

By PO2 Oliver Cole
Navy News Service

Under Secretary of the Navy, Dr. Janine Davidson, presented the 2015 Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher Distinguished Civilian Humanitarian Award to James McLaughlin, Chairman of the Honor Flight Network, and Diane Gresse, executive director of the Honor Flight Network, on behalf of the Honor Flight Network at the Pentagon Nov. 7, 2016.

The Honor Flight Network is a non-profit organization created to honor America's veterans for their sacrifices by transporting them, accompanied by "guardians" to assist them, to Washington, D.C. to visit and reflect at their memorials.

"It's a very humbling honor to receive this award on behalf of our network," said Gresse. "We have a lot of faithful volunteers, so we're not just receiving this on behalf of ourselves, but for our entire network and the countless thousands of volunteer hours they put in every year."

Representatives from the Honor Flight Network said the network started with offering this opportunity to World War II veterans. It transitioned to veterans of the Korean conflict and Vietnam War. There have even been a few all female flights. The awardees both stated that there are nearly 700,000 living veterans, but suggest there is urgency to expedite flights with every generation.

"I'd like the public to realize that we have to hurry to get these veterans transported to see their

memorials," said McLaughlin. "It's important for the veterans to be recognized. Time is limited. We have to move quickly."

In 2015, the Honor Flight Network was able to fly 20,886 veterans and 19,093 guardians to Washington, D.C. from all over the United States. Currently, there are 21,032 people on a waiting list for the program. By the end of the network's current flying season in November, it is estimated that more than 180,000 veterans will have seen their memorials.

"It's like they're strangers on Friday," Gresse said, explaining her view a trip. "By Saturday morning they are teamed up on the bus headed into D.C. By Saturday night they are in the front of the bus telling one another war stories. And by Sunday we're all crying because they don't want to go home yet. So it's just a wonderful experience for everyone involved."

There are 130 hubs across 44 states in the entire network. The dedication of the men, women and partners of the Honor Flight Network strikes at the heart of what the Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher Distinguished Civilian Humanitarian Award exemplifies.

The award is named in honor of Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher, both of whom contributed extensively to the support and welfare of members

See **AWARD**

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REDESIGN

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construction.”

Upgrading the cooling towers and adding a fourth cooling tower was finished in October.

“The old towers was a three-cell system; it was old it was rickety, it was dangerous, and because we have a new project upcoming, upgrading the entire hospital, we needed a bigger cooling load,” said Ensign Alexander Megeff, construction manager. “So we executed this project to increase from a three-cell tower to a four-cell tower as well as numerous electrical and pipe upgrades that will service the new hospital with the more demanding cooling loads that we’re expecting.”

The \$29 million project awarded to Walsh Construction also changed how the water was cooled so less water is consumed.

“We’re using air to cool water instead of more water to cool water,” Megeff said. “So that saves the hospital a lot of money in utilities and saves a lot more on water demand and consumption.”

The exterior upgrades to Buildings 60 and 61 were finished in September.

Lt. Quinn Mazant, construction manager, said the \$20.1 million

project fixed leaks and replaced the brick veneer with precast concrete panels on the 30-year-old barracks.

“There were leaks, the infrastructure was a little off, and a lot of wear,” Mazant said.

The project was completed in stages and took longer than originally planned because of various unforeseen conditions that delayed installing the precast concrete panels, Mazant said.

John C. Grimberg Co. was awarded the contract for the exterior upgrades, and is also working on the new six-level parking garage that is being built between the Navy Lodge and Child Development Centers.

The \$15.8 million project will add 650 new parking spaces that feature smart parking – indicating how many spaces are available – and will be made from reinforced precast concrete, Mazant said. The foundation was completed at the end of October, with the actual structure started going up this week. Construction of the parking garage has rerouted traffic to one-way with a re-route to Grier Road. The project is expected to be finished in March.

The completed parking garage will help offset the loss of parking spaces in the G-lot due to the construction of temporary buildings during the medical center redesign construction.



PHOTO BY ELIE NAANOUEH

Naval Support Activity Bethesda Public Works Department recently completed a cooling towers project, which changed how the water is cooled so less water is consumed.



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AWARD

From
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of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families.

“Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher are true patriotic Americans,” said Davidson. “What they’ve done for veterans and families, and wounded warriors; it exemplifies what makes our country great. We all stand up as a family and support the people who serve.”

In 1998, a joint regulation established the award as a multiservice recognition, demonstrating exceptional patriotism and humanitarian concern for members of the Armed Forces or their families. The recipient must exemplify Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher’s personal qualities of patriotism, generosity and selfless dedication to improving the quality of life of members of the Armed Forces of the United States.

Names of the recipients of the award are engraved on brass plates and included in the legacy display at the Pentagon. In addition, recipients are presented with a medallion, lapel pin and certificate signed by the Service Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force.



PHOTO BY PO2 OLIVER COLE

Under Secretary of the Navy Dr. Janine Davidson presents the 2015 Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher Distinguished Civilian Humanitarian Award to James McLaughlin, chairman of the Honor Flight Network, and Diane Gresse, executive director of the Honor Flight Network, on behalf of the Honor Flight Network at the Pentagon Nov. 7, 2016. The Honor Flight Network is a non-profit organization created to honor America’s veterans for all their scarifies by transporting them, accompanied by “guardians” to assist them, to Washington, D.C. to visit and reflect at their memorials.



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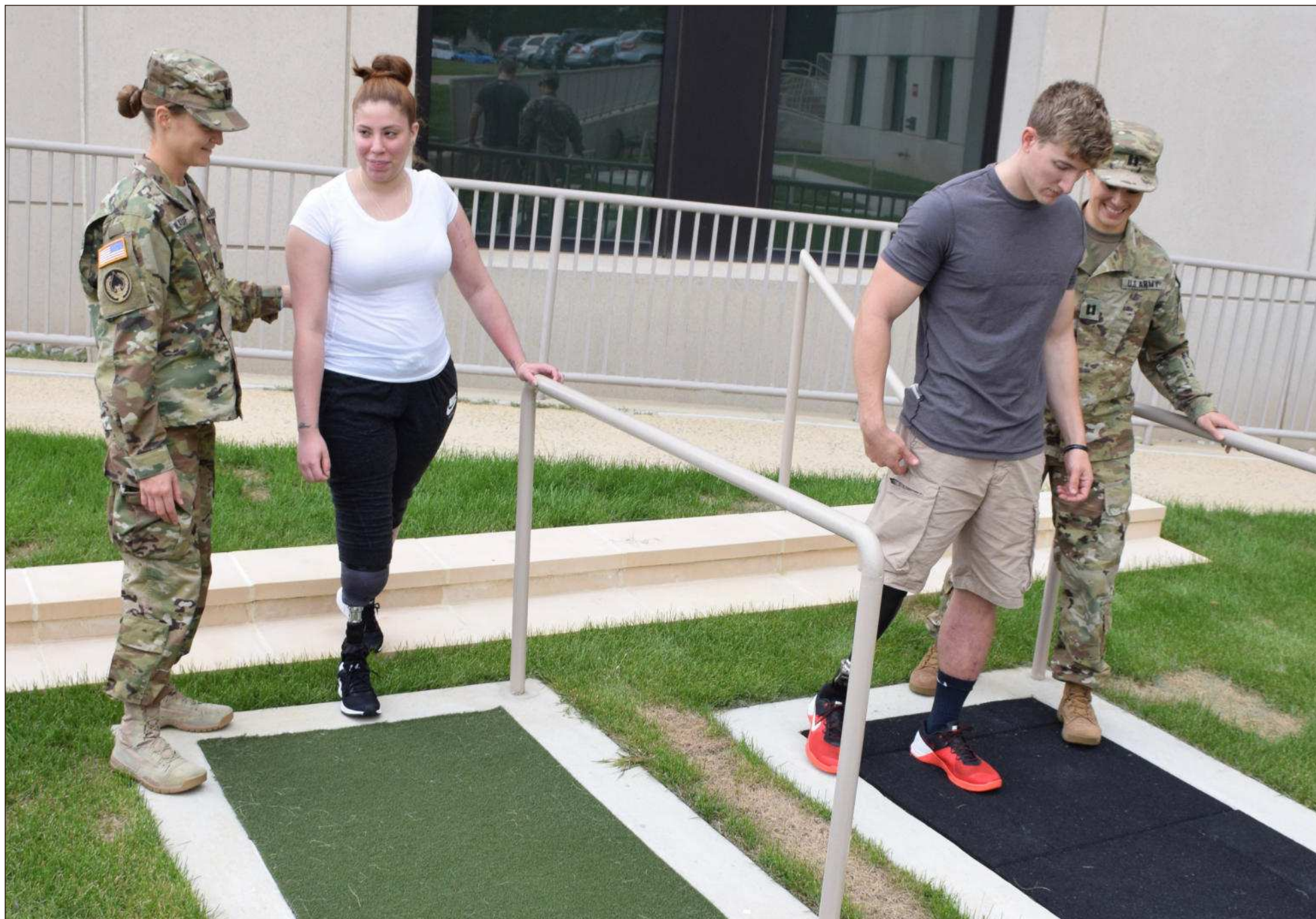


PHOTO BY MARK OSWELL

The new terrain park outside of the Military Advanced Training Center at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center provides a tool for physical therapists to simulate uneven terrain for their amputee patients without having to go to specific destinations to do so.

WRB's New Terrain Park: Traversing Multiple Obstacles

By Mark Oswell
WRNMMC Public Affairs

When most people hear the words “terrain park” they think of either a series of obstacles in a skate park or the snow-covered ramps on a mountain slope.

The new terrain park at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) – is neither of those.

Proposed by former WRNMMC Department of Rehabilitation Chief Dr. Charles Scoville, the terrain park rests just outside of the hospital's Military Advanced Treatment Center. This provides another means for Walter Reed Bethesda (WRB) physical therapists to simulate uneven terrain for their amputee patients without having to go to specific destinations to do so.

“The terrain park was built in order to assist wounded service members

with their rehabilitations goals. With the varying surfaces it provides it simulates different environments the service member may be in while using their injured limbs,” explained Army Capt. Nicole Brown, MATC Officer-in-Charge. “For instance, there is sand to simulate going to the beach/dessert, rocks to simulate hiking, varying wood/grass/rubber surfaces to simulate various surfaces they will encounter just living life.

Patients will use the terrain park to build confidence on traversing various types of uneven terrain including – sand, stones, artificial turf, plastic decking, non-skid and small pebbles.

“The obstacle course has helped me

practice and manage the control of my movement and balance. I like that it has different terrains to practice to get a sensation of how a certain terrain would feel and how much control you have with the prosthesis,” said Army Spc. Deborah Perez, a Walter Reed Bethesda patient. “The hardest obstacle course panel would have to be the one with the big rocks since it's a constant change of placement due to the different sizes and shapes. The easiest — I would have to say is the panel with the black foam like textured floor. It feels smooth and it's less pressure on the limb when walking through it.”

According to Brown, an amputee

patient would be introduced to the terrain park after they have mastered walking in the parallel bars and then mastered walking on even ground.

“I know it's helped me get a better placement of my prosthesis so I won't end up falling or injuring myself,” added Perez. “I believe the more and more practice that I receive in the obstacle course will help me trust my prosthesis and where it goes without having that little bit of fear of falling over.”

Opened in August, physical therapists and patients plan to take full advantage of the terrain park more to support WRB patients as they return to their lives.



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